**Writer-researcher-facilitator: An integrative model for creative writers working in wellbeing contexts and beyond**

**Keywords**

Creative writing; writing and wellbeing; facilitation; groups; pedagogy; research methods; evaluation; reflexivity; personal development.

**Abstract**

In this paper we introduce an integrative model for working as a creative writer-researcher-facilitator (W-R-F). During the process of designing a new MA in Creative Writing and Wellbeing, we realized that we wanted to reexamine the complex interrelationships between the different strands of our work, in order to provide a framework within which our students could explore their own evolving practice. The model that we present here has emerged from this ongoing process of reflection and conversation in relation to our own practice, and was subsequently developed collaboratively with a group of practitioners working in the context of writing and wellbeing. We have found that creative exploration of these three interdependent aspects of our own lives—writing-researching-facilitating—can help us to recognize practical ways in which to integrate them into a more cohesive whole. We believe that this model also suggests ways for writer-researcher-facilitators to support one another in sharing best practice and in advancing developments in the field. We hope to begin a further conversation that will be immediately applicable to those working in the area of writing and wellbeing, but also to anyone

negotiating the challenges, tensions and creative synergies inherent to living as a writer in the world.

**Introduction**

*“But can I really call my creative writing ‘research’?”*

*“I’m not a researcher, although I do know about running writing workshops...”*

*“I’m not an academic, so I can’t call myself a researcher.”*

These are some of the thoughts that we frequently hear writers voice when we talk to them about their practice. We believe that writing, researching and facilitating are key processes with which most writers regularly engage in some way. However for many writers the relationship between these processes feels problematic, unresolved or perhaps even full of tension.

Many writers may see their primary and most important activity as the writing itself, even if they are unable to engage in this process on a full-time basis, and whether or not they would label this as practice-based research. Increasingly, writers are asked to facilitate writing: namely, the crafting, telling and sharing processes of others in settings as diverse as schools, libraries, universities, literary festivals, hospices, care homes, community groups and the professional development departments of corporate organizations. This work, too, might feed directly into a writer’s research aims. Or, it might not. If we consider research in its simplest terms—an investigation with the aim to

reach a new conclusion—then it is clear that both writing and facilitating are valid forms of research, separately or in combination.

Sometimes, then, this relationship between writing, research and facilitating can feel highly creative and productive: for example, when our writing practice informs and enriches our pedagogical approach to workshops; or when facilitation becomes a process of action research, which in turn contributes to the shaping of the discipline. However, these tasks can also feel as if they are in direct and unhelpful conflict with one another. The arrangement of our educational institutions and often our job roles themselves can lead to one of these aspects being privileged over another. In some universities, for example, a more traditional conception of research is still privileged over teaching (despite creative outputs being included in the REF) and writers may find themselves arguing for the value of practice-based research outputs—novels, collections of poems, life writing. Creative writers still find themselves justifying their practice as research or arguing for its value alongside research in other disciplines. Pedagogical research, where writers reflect on their practice of facilitation, is often an under-developed area. In other institutions—schools, for example—the value of teaching writing is privileged over research and/or the teacher's practice as a writer. It seems that, in the midst of these tensions, many of us do not think of ourselves as researchers at all.

All of this can lead to a misconception of what we believe is the vital and enriching relationship between writing, researching and facilitating. We would go so far as to say that we believe that these processes are fundamental to our wellbeing, being bound up in our personal and professional identities and the way that we understand ourselves.

We have each worked as a writer-researcher-facilitator in the broad field of writing and wellbeing for a good number of years, and yet neither of us necessarily articulated our work in this way until now. It was when we began the design and creation of a new MA Creative Writing and Wellbeing at Teesside University[1] that we found ourselves asking what it is that our students might be doing, how they might currently be working and how best we could equip them for a future that demands many different skills from writers; from the crafting, editing and contextualizing of one's own work, to critical analysis of this process, to an ability to become reflexive facilitators of this process for and with others. We wanted to design a pathway through the course that would speak to each of these three ways of working from the very first week. We knew that we did not want to wait until the final dissertation module to invite students to see themselves as researchers, but rather to embed this from the beginning through design for active learning. As a result of this process, we devised the W-R-F model that we set out in this paper. We hope that W-R-F offers a way of guiding not only our students but also everyone in our community of practice and inquiry (Lave and Wenger 1998) in developing and integrating each of these identities or "selves."

**Why do we need models and frameworks?**

As the diverse programme at the annual NAWE conference demonstrates year upon year, many writers—often those who have used writing in support of their own health and wellbeing—venture into contexts where the ideas and experiences they have developed may be of support to others. Writers may

also be asked to contribute workshops in health and wellbeing contexts, sometimes working with vulnerable groups of people who are ill or dealing with trauma of other kinds. Because of this, attention is now being paid to the ethical implications of such work and the need for safeguarding of both participants and facilitators.

In an article for Mslexia, the popular magazine for writers, Carolyn Jess-Cooke (2017: 52-53) interviewed a number of facilitators and participants of creative writing workshops in wellbeing contexts. She calls for research and "further dialogue about safeguarding—which protects, prepares and professionalizes the work," whilst noting that there is an urgent need to take into account what she perceives as the "crossovers between writing-as-art and writing-as-therapy."

We would agree that—whether or not we explicitly enter into a health and wellbeing context, or conceive of ourselves as working in the field of "writing and wellbeing"—the impetus of our students and participants (and ourselves) to write from deeply felt personal experience makes any writing workshop a space in which difficult subject matter may inevitably arise and need to be negotiated. All of this suggests that there is a growing necessity to think through our own relationship between writing and facilitating, and how the knowledge we gain from this reflection might be helpful in sharing and defining best practice, in safeguarding others and ourselves and in furthering the evidence base for creative writing and wellbeing in the longer term.

The work that we do in writing and wellbeing also needs to be situated within the wider context of growing research around the benefits of arts in health. As

Daisy Fancourt (2017: ix) writes, “the use of arts in health has blossomed. What, for many centuries, was seen as a fringe activity is now being recognized as a field that has enormous impact on both individuals and societies.” Nevertheless, as Fancourt adds, “despite this surge in interest and activity, there is still limited support available for people working in the field.” We need to find ways to support people working using writing across what is a very wide range of settings.

From a pragmatic perspective, we need to evaluate and capture the work we do in order to fund and sustain it, and to advance our knowledge. As Stephen Clift (2012: 121) writes, we know that “the arts can and do have a role to play in enhancing well-being and quality of life, even in the most disadvantaged of environments” yet it is increasingly the case that “robust evidence [is] central to any effort to translate promising demonstration projects into sustained programmes of work through commissioning by the public sector.” If we wish to promote writing in wellbeing contexts, we need to gather a richer evidence base for what we know can be profound, transformative and valuable work.

The Paper Nations Benchmark (Soyinka and Sweetman 2018) sets out a number of “good practice principles in writer development” for the “emerging” and “continuing” writer, as well as the “writer-facilitator”. In this benchmark, “writer-facilitator” connotes “experienced or published writers who are looking for guidance in the practice of supporting developing writers”, and who may be working in “different professional contexts and modes, for example as teachers, freelance tutors, workshop leaders, editors or agents” (Soyinka and Sweetman 2018: iv-v). Our model thus provides a further branch to this important and useful discussion by incorporating the ways in which writer-

facilitators also work as researchers. We would like to extend the discussion begun by Paper Nations around the “good practice principles” of facilitating writing, to address the ways in which writer-facilitators might specifically work in wellbeing contexts—their own and that of others—perhaps in healthcare and community settings. In doing so, we advocate for the many ways in which a critical-reflective research perspective can (and often should) be adopted in these settings. We envisage this as a first step in strengthening the support available to those taking the literary arts into health settings, and also a way to capture and evaluate the commendable work being done in this area as practice-based research. Perhaps we need a similar benchmark that aims to look at work within the specific settings of writing and wellbeing.

The importance of the relationship between research and facilitation is underlined when we consider the ways in which the nature of education continues to transform—particularly in response to the new challenges of employability in a fluid and uncertain world. As John Seely Brown (2002: 68) attests: “Contrary to popular assumptions that as people delve further into an academic field, they simply become more theoretical, the reality of graduate education today is that practice, not theory, is at the top of the pyramid”. We believe that, in order to equip writers with skills for “lifelong and lifewide learning” (Redecker 2014: 6) we need to find ways of supporting people to reflect on the practices and processes of their writing and facilitation—the doing of writing—and to bring to this understanding a critical-creative rigour. Every writer has a valuable contribution to make to the knowledge base that underpins our advancing field.

## The W-R-F model in practice

As we have already noted, the W-R-F model first emerged out of our efforts to support students of the MA Creative Writing and Wellbeing. We wanted to encourage these postgraduate students to adopt the critical-reflective identity of researcher early on in their studies. However, in embedding this model into the initial module of the course, Megan quickly found that she herself felt galvanized by this concept. As is the case for many writers, her work had often felt far from cohesive. Yet, when viewing the various strands of this work through the integrative W-R-F model, she recognized greater integration than she had previously acknowledged. A specific example of this occurred in the design and facilitation of a creative journal-writing workshop for an audience at Chipping Norton Literary Festival (Hayes 2019a).

In the workshop, Megan guided participants through a series of creative and expressive writing prompts. These prompts challenged—overtly and discreetly—the boundaries between creative and more personally reflective forms of writing. Thus this instance of facilitation was drawn from and synthesized Megan's on-going interdisciplinary research (Hayes 2015 and Hayes 2019b) and public-facing commercial non-fiction writing (Hayes 2018). Moreover, the W-R-F model enabled Megan to recognize another key area of synergy: the potential to capture the subjective experiences of workshop participants as a research activity in itself. Creative writing pedagogies and processes provide us with powerful ways to evaluate our research. Creative writing can therefore be the method of the research activity as well as a means of evaluating it. This opens up a range of innovative ways for each of

us to evidence and communicate the value of what we do with a wider audience.

Fiction writer Nellie Hermann (2016) reflects on her experiences of working as a tutor on the programme in Narrative Medicine at Columbia University. She describes the journey she has made over the years from standard evaluation questionnaires—What did you enjoy? What did you not enjoy? What did you learn?—to the use of tailor-made creative assignments at the end of each course. She now asks students to apply the learning they gain on her course to "a real medical school experience, preferably a patient encounter" (Hermann 2016: 234). For example, a medical student might take a fiction course then write a fictional account of a real-life encounter with a patient. Hermann believes that these pieces of creative work

> ...show us, they enact for us in a way that no mere check-box evaluation can, the ways that the creative work is operating on the students: creative pathways are being opened and being used, not in order to take them far away from medicine… but to help them to explore and reflect on their daily lives and what they are learning. These creative activities invite the students to engage and think in multiple directions about the work they are beginning to practice; they perhaps invite them to modes of interrogation that they may not yet have in their arsenal (Hermann 2016: 237).

Thus, students' creative work yields important information for their tutor about what they have learned in their ongoing development as reflexive practitioners.

The value of creative work as evaluation was confirmed for Sophie in the early stages of her work with a group of opthalmic surgeons carrying out high-risk surgeries in a large NHS Trust. The aim of the project is to provide surgeons

with creative writing tools and resources to help them to explore their lives in helpful ways. Together, the project group aims to discover whether creative writing can support surgeons, helping them to develop self-care strategies and to build resilience.

Although detailed end-of-session questionnaires completed by participants after an early workshop did yield some helpful information about what participants had valued most about the experience of writing, perhaps the most important data on the benefits of writing to the surgeons was captured in a collaborative poem that participants produced together during the workshop. The poem itself has become a touchstone for the ongoing work of the group, and a constant reminder of what motivated the group members to seek ways to nurture themselves and to stay connected with their emotions and those of patients and their families. The content of the poem also provided Sophie with a useful form of feedback about what the group had found helpful and the progress being made, enabling her to plan for the next session. It provided a level of detail that the end-of-session questionnaire could not, in the form of metaphor, symbol and deep reflection.[2]

In a conference presentation, Fiona Sampson (2000) has previously offered practical examples of evaluation methods that "make explicit the central importance of the personal and creative character of the activity they examine; and of the experiences of participants in their own words." Sampson's list of methods included participants' individual narratives of the project (written retrospectively) as well as ongoing reflections in project journals, and participants' own writing, sometimes with the help of an enabling

writer. We would add to this the value of reflections by the writer-facilitator on the research process.

In her own practice, Sophie has found that writing both creatively and critically about her experiences of facilitating workshops can be a useful way of gaining insight into them. This is a key part of reflexive practice and has become commonplace in many healthcare trainings. It is also a helpful way of noticing any uncomfortable feelings that might surface for us as facilitators. Therefore, it can be a way of helping to maintain our own wellbeing, especially if there are also opportunities to bring our reflective writing to supervision.

The examples we have discussed here each lend weight to the idea of framing our writing (W) and facilitating (F) as ongoing research (R). We hope these examples also illustrate how we are working with the W-R-F framework in order to evaluate the benefits of writing in a number of ways:

- honouring the role of the emerging writer-selves of others in the research process;
- actively investigating our own roles as writers and writer-facilitators in the research process,
- and, finally, examining the ways in which our writer-selves and those of others interact in the research process.

Through sharing the W-R-F model we hope to encourage a view of practice as practice-based research, and beyond this to find strategies for gathering

this research and working collaboratively to inform an evidence-based practice.

We do not anticipate that everyone who writes and facilitates, whether in wellbeing contexts or otherwise, wishes to be redefined as a researcher. Rather, we advocate for fluidity between research and practice. We encourage anyone with a passion for—and/or active practice within—the field to recognize the work they already do as valid research, where they don't already.

**The W-R-F Model**

As we attempt to draw all of these ideas together, we offer here our nascent model, which we hope might be helpful to those working in writing for wellbeing contexts to begin to capture—or further develop the ways in which they already capture—their explorations and practice.

**Figure 1: The W-R-F Model**

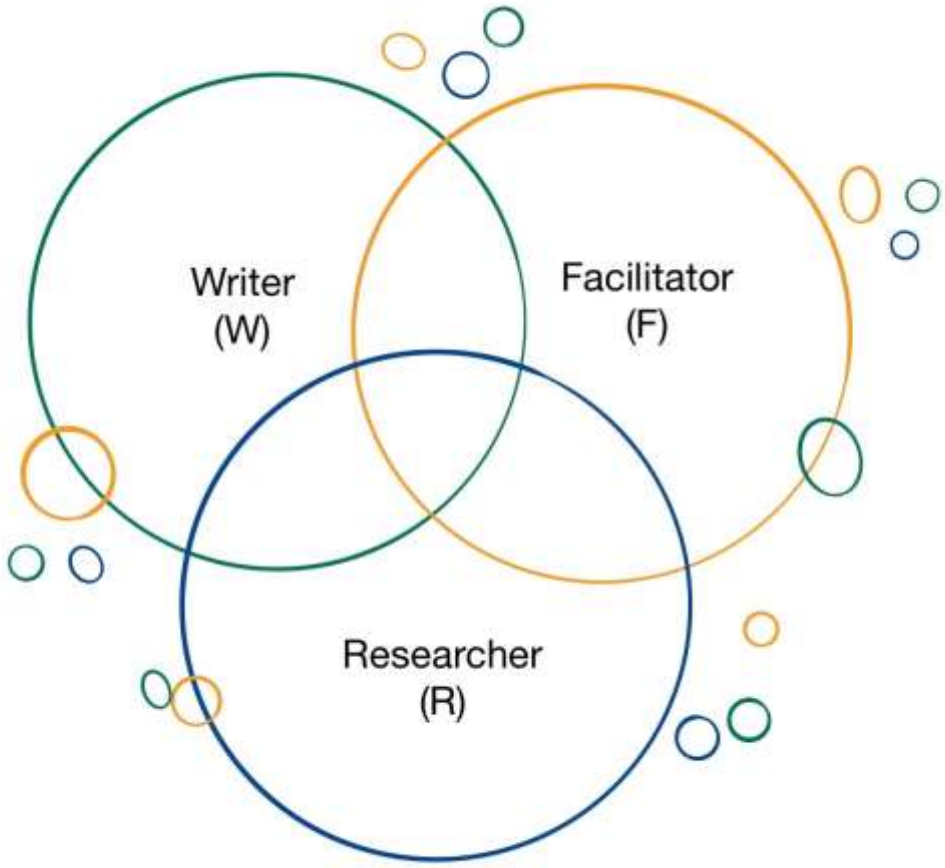


Figure 1: The W-R-F Model

The large circles in Figure 1 are titled with the principal areas in which an individual might be working. The smaller circles could represent other related roles or projects, personal or professional, of varying size and scope that may feed into one's role as a writer-researcher-facilitator to a greater or lesser degree. The W-R-F model is deliberately broad in scope given that we are aware of how diverse the careers of writers may be—in wellbeing contexts or otherwise, and within the academy, as well as beyond it

The W-R-F model is experiential in its approach. We are influenced in our thinking by Kolb who drew on models of learning by Piaget and Freire to suggest that “learning is by its very nature a tension and conflict-filled process” (1984: 41) in which different parts of ourselves are brought into confrontation; according to Kolb, “To learn is not the special province of a single, specialized realm of human functioning such as cognition or perception. It involves the integrated functioning of the total organism - thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving.” Learning emerges, Kolb writes, “as a function of dialectic tensions between basic modes of relating to the world” (1984: 43).

It is this “integrated functioning” of writing, facilitating and researching that we seek to develop in our own practice, in the practice of our students and in the wider community of people with whom we are in dialogue. Kolb’s emphasis on the holistic nature of learning provides us with a way of synthesizing the approaches and processes—both macro and micro—involved in working across the W-R-F domains, as well as within them. It helps us to characterize the fluid movements between W, R and F, and to conceive of writing and facilitating as research, and facilitating (or teaching) as an activity that is as creative and productive as that of writing.

We would also like to suggest that the W-R-F model is a helpful tool for the development of what Redecker, reflecting upon her major foresight study on the future of learning for the European Union (Redecker et al 2011), describes as “lifewide and lifelong learning” (2014: 6). Responding to the challenge of “lifewide” learning, Jackson argues for the importance of tools that “enhance

self-awareness" and "attitudes that view life experiences as opportunities for learning and development" (2014: 2).

W-R-F also supports an "ecological" view of learning, which "goes beyond the conception of learning that can be organized through containment and recognizes that it is both personally and socially situated across and through life's experience" (Middleton 2018: 28).

In suggesting this model, we do not set out to limit or "flatten" the rich variety of current practice but to further understand, enable and expand it. Where the model does not prove useful, it must, of course, be adapted or even abandoned. The feeling of one's practice is highly personal. Therefore, we aim to help people to honour and find helpful frameworks and critical underpinnings for this felt practice, where necessary making (re)connections between practice and research/ knowledge creation.

**Testing the W-R-F Model**

Having established the model, we then sought to "test" its viability and usefulness with practitioners in the field of writing and wellbeing. At the micro level, the purpose of the W-R-F model is to help individuals develop in any area they feel is important for them, fostering a sense of belonging and professionalism in each realm. A given individual might feel confident as a writer, but less so as a facilitator. Another might feel well-practised in facilitation, but anxious about their creative work, perhaps wishing that they could produce or publish more. Yet another might feel adept at research

(practice-based or otherwise) and yet be filled with dread at the idea of facilitation.

At the macro level, we propose this model in an attempt to unify what is already a diverse range of individuals, with a breadth of expertise, working across the broadly defined field of writing and wellbeing and beyond. These individuals may be emerging or established creative practitioners, in relation to the Paper Nations Benchmark (Soyinka and Sweetman 2018), but they might equally be writer-counsellors, writer-therapists, writer-educators or otherwise.

To test this thinking at both the micro and macro level, in February 2019, Sophie ran a workshop as part of a weekend symposium for members of Lapidus International, the UK-based Words for Wellbeing Association. The workshop was entitled ‘What do we mean by research in writing and wellbeing?’ Participants shared a wealth of experience across a range of writing and wellbeing settings, which included: the use of writing for their own personal and professional development and in one-to-one and group work as counsellors and therapists; in end-of-life care, cancer care, and in a range of health care settings; and in many different areas of education.

Sophie began her workshop session by asking participants to free-write for ten minutes around the word “research” and what it meant to them. Participants then discussed this activity in small groups. It was evident that, although many of the participants felt very confident about their application of creative writing techniques and approaches within their sphere of professional expertise, and discussed the nuances of these with enthusiasm, they did not

see themselves as researchers. A common phrase voiced at this point, often prefacing observations of great value and insight, was “I’m not an academic but...” When questioned further about this, many of the participants, although highly experienced in running writing workshops and practical hands-on interventions, did not see themselves as doing research. Instead, they viewed research as something that happens in a university setting, carried out by academics.

Other common fears expressed were that research can lead to “bamboozlement” or that it involved misuse of “power,” a “tendency towards elevation” or “elaborate language that feels exclusionary.” Some participants suggested that new research methods were needed in order to account for practice that is “non linear” and “open ended.” Some participants shared their own experiences or the experiences of people they knew who had struggled with doctoral research.

It was clear from this discussion that there was a recognition of the value of research when it involves “seeking,” “listening to what’s there,” “enabling others to build on what you have done” and “challenging” or “dismantling” misconceptions; but that many experienced and talented writer-facilitators felt alienated from the idea of research, approached it with mistrust or simply did not think that it was something to which they could contribute.

Sophie then introduced the model of writer-researcher-facilitator and asked participants to “map” or draw these three aspects of their practice on large pieces of paper. She gave people the following guidelines:

> Take some time to close your eyes and connect with each of these aspects of your practice. Then, when you are ready, select three colours, one for each of writer, researcher, facilitator.
>
> Thinking about yourself and your current practice, map out or draw what each of these looks like and feels like for you right now, in whatever way makes sense to you.
>
> Think about the shape of these aspects of your practice: the size, texture, any images that come to mind—however vivid or hazy—and the relative space that each takes up for you right now. If you held writer or researcher or facilitator in your hand, how heavy or light would it feel? Is it warm or cool? Does it have a taste, a sound, an outline, perhaps a voice?
>
> If it feels right, you can note down any words or associations that come to mind.

Participants engaged enthusiastically with this task for thirty minutes, after which they were then encouraged to share and discuss their experiences. Many found that the exercise revealed to them the area of their practice that currently felt most under-developed. Some participants shared that they had realized what was "blocking" them from doing more of W, R or F. Many participants shared that they had not previously realized that they could frame their writing or their facilitation of others' writing as research that might be helpful to the field.

In her free writing, one of the participants, Christina, wrote that research was a way of "searching, searching for meaning, grasping, thinking, stumbling, re-searching, searching again, re-examining, exploring, going in circles and wondering what it all means." Through her freewriting she discovered her own fear of this process: "What if it all grows too big?" But by the end of the writing, she arrived at a new understanding: "We find a way in the calm, after the expulsion and growth and chaos and fear to stand and be, to take new breath

and see the simplicity of life, reconnecting, re-searching, finding a new way of being."

When Christina shared this with her group, they were inspired to research the origins of the word "research," using Google on their phones to discover the etymological links with the Old French *rechercher*, meaning to go about seeking. Christina noted the resonance for her of this idea of seeking or searching after something.

In her sketching of the three aspects of her practice, she drew three closely intertwined lines to represent writing, researching and facilitating, noting that writing and researching feels as if it might be 'running away' and that it 'needs to overlap' with her facilitation work.

Once participants had sketched out their feelings around W-R-F and discussed them with one another, Sophie asked them to use the insights they had gained to make action plans of what they needed to do next, in order to develop, nurture or bring into balance particular areas.

Some weeks later, when reflecting on her freewriting and drawing during the workshop, Christina wrote:

> On reflection the invitation to acknowledge the three different parts of self has been enlightening, giving a sense of permission for the researcher self to be allowed to be part of the creative process rather than stark and separate. Seeing the visual especially intertwined with writer and facilitator has brought an understanding about the relationship between the three, and a confidence in my practice which has been useful to return to when thinking about myself and my work in a reflexive way.

Helen Sword's work on academic writing (2017) offers a useful parallel to this process. Sword identifies four "cornerstones" of a flourishing writing practice: behavioral habits of discipline and persistence (B); artisanal habits of craftsmanship and care (A); social habits of collegiality and collaboration (S); and emotional habits of positivity and pleasure (E). This BASE provides a framework for understanding the complex interplay of four aspects of writing in order that we might become more productive and fulfilled. At her accompanying website, writersdiet.com, Sword offers a playful space where we are invited to move four coloured dots on a relational diagram, producing a profile of where we might need to develop our habits and skills. Sophie has found this tool invaluable in revealing how solitary and isolated she had become in her own writing habits. By focusing on doing more social writing (S) she produced a collaborative paper on writing and walking (Nicholls and Trofimova 2018) and she is now writing this paper with Megan.

With our own W-R-F model, we hope to take a similar approach, encouraging others to use playful tools to identify where they might most enjoy focusing their strategic efforts, in order to bring to light and develop the otherwise overlooked aspects of their writer-facilitator-researcher selves.

**Using the W-R-F Model: A tool for reflexive practice**

Below we offer a table of first questions, or reflective writing prompts, which we envisage might be useful to those interested in integrating their work in the ways that we have outlined.

| Reflective Questions for the Writer Researcher Facilitator (W R F) | |
|---|---|
| ***Writer Self*** | • How do I *feel* as a writer? What does writing feel like?<br>• What do I want my writing to do in the world? What are my hopes and aims for my writing?<br>• Do I want to share my writing in some way? |
| ***Writer-Facilitator Self*** | • How does it *feel* to be a facilitator?<br>• How do I support the creative aims and developing writer-selves of others?<br>• What are the ethical considerations around my work? How do I keep myself safe and others safe? |
| ***Researcher Self*** | • What does the idea of research *feel like* for me?<br>• How do I capture and evaluate my practice as a writer-facilitator?<br>• What might be helpful about what I do for others' and their ways of working? How could the work of others—creative and critical theory, ideas, frameworks—support or challenge what I am doing? |
| **Integrating my work as a *Writer-Researcher-Facilitator*** | • Which areas feel under-developed or take up the least space in my life? Where do I long to focus or grow further? What aspects do I need to nurture in myself and my life?<br>• Which areas take up the most space in my life? Is this OK?<br>• Can I map this out visually on paper in some way?<br>• Are there any conflicts? Synergies? Potential to benefit from this overlap, for myself or for those with whom I work?<br>• What else do I notice in bringing these selves together? |

We suggest an active learning approach to the use of this tool. For example, it may be helpful to approach the W-R-F mapping process through doodling and drawing, as in the example described above. Our early testing suggests that

this playful, intuitive and creative approach can help people to tune in to the three aspects of the model.

You may choose to approach this tool by working on your own or with others. Here are some suggestions that you might like to explore:

- Use a whiteboard wall. Each participant takes an area of the same whiteboard wall to do their mapping and then stands back and compares it with the mapping of others. This can be helpful for promoting conversation and discussion around similarities and divergences.
- Use large pieces of paper and coloured post-it-notes that can be easily moved around as participants think through their relationship with the three domains.
- Use playdough, plasticine and construction straws to help participants to create 3-D models of how each of the domains feel.
- Use the floor and have participants ‘pace out’ or embody the mapping of each of the domains in space or do large-scale diagramming and doodling.

As we refine the model and its application, we would welcome feedback. As a next step, we are exploring the ways in which the W-R-F model might be useful for our PhD students, particularly as they negotiate the creative and critical elements of their work, and so we would be particularly interested in hearing if the model proves useful in this context.

## Conclusion

This paper has outlined how—when designing a learning journey through the complexly intertwined domains of writing, researching and facilitating—we unexpectedly devised an integrative model to articulate this hybrid mode of working, drawing upon our own practical experience. We then took this model to a collaborative workshop with Lapidus International members for further discussion and refinement. The practitioner participants at this workshop welcomed the W-R-F model as a way to acknowledge and integrate work already being conducted. They also noted that it provided a pragmatic tool, encouraging reflexivity and strategic planning for self-development in key areas. From this workshop we have distilled some reflective exercises to accompany our model, which we hope are of use to others.

As our work with W-R-F model develops, we continue to think about potential adaptations that may be helpful for writers working within the academy and beyond. This is a key future direction for our inquiry and we would welcome responses from writers outside of the academy who feel they might usefully apply and/or adapt this model to their specific ways of working. In particular, we are interested in further exploring how the model might support Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for writers.

It is our hope that the W-R-F model will serve as a way for many more of us to recognize and celebrate the holistic nature of our work and—where we don't already—to understand ourselves as active researchers. We believe the model can offer a firmer sense of identity for those of us working in the area of

writing and wellbeing—but also for those working outside of this across the three realms of practice—by offering a means of understanding this work in an integrated manner. In integrating our work into a holistic model at the individual level, we hope that this may encourage increasing integration at the collective level, and thus further research and promote best practice in writing and wellbeing, and beyond.

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[1] This course was launched in September 2019. Through a process of formal and informal consultation with writers based in a number of fields including members of both NAWE and Lapidus, we identified a demand for a programme that would equip students with the critical-reflective skills to write, research and facilitate writing in wellbeing contexts. We set out to foreground the importance of creative process as well as product and to enable students to investigate and further develop best practice in this emerging field.

[2] The workshop described is part of a larger ongoing research project, which uses narrative inquiry as a means of examining the potential benefits of creative writing as a strategy for alleviating stress in a group of surgeons working in a 'high-stakes' area of surgery. Though we would not suggest that creative writing itself is the only means of evaluation used in this context, it has yielded some very useful data in combination with other qualitative methods.